



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **BANKNORTH EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT WINS SBA'S FINANCIAL SERVICES AWARD**

**BOSTON** – Mark Collins, Banknorth Executive Vice President, has been named the 2004 Massachusetts Financial Services Champion by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) according to an announcement made by Mark S. Hayward, Acting Massachusetts SBA District Director.

The Financial Services Champion Award is presented annually to an individual who assists small businesses in obtaining financing either directly or through advocacy efforts to increase the availability of financial services.

“The SBA champion awards honor the best small business has to offer, and Mark Collins is an outstanding choice,” said SBA Regional Administrator Jeffrey Butland. “This is an outstanding testimonial, not only to his accomplishments, but to his commitment and dedication to small business success and community service as well. I join my SBA colleagues in congratulating Mark on this significant achievement.”

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Mark Collins is in charge of overseeing the small business, marketing, advertising, public relations and sales strategies for Banknorth, N.A., a \$26 billion bank headquartered in Portland, Maine. Banknorth is the third largest retail and commercial banking company headquartered in New England and services Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York with its 350 branches.

“Because of Mark Collins’ leadership, advocacy and strategic focus, Banknorth has risen to become the #3 SBA lender in Massachusetts,” said Hayward. “When Banknorth first expanded into Massachusetts, Collins created a special banner that read *SBA #3 in 2003*. The commercial lenders at Banknorth rose to this challenge and finished the year in third place on SBA’s bank ranking list. This trend is holding true in 2004 with Banknorth providing small businesses with significant access to credit.”

Collins will be honored at an awards breakfast at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston on June 10, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. The Massachusetts Small Business Person of the Year, Larry O’Toole, president of Somerville-based Gentle Giant Moving Company, Inc., will also be honored along with eight other small businesses and champions from throughout the state. The event is open to the public and those interested in attending should contact Christine Carter at SBA at 617-565-5560.

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